

OBESITY FACTS: SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES IN ALASKA

WHAT ARE SSBs?¹

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are those that contain caloric sweeteners and include:

SOFT DRINKS: Nonalcoholic, flavored, carbonated or non-carbonated beverages usually commercially prepared and sold in bottles or cans

SODA, POP, SODA POP: Same as soft drink

FRUIT DRINKS, PUNCHES, OR ADES: Sweetened beverages of diluted fruit juice

SPORTS DRINKS: Beverages designed to help athletes rehydrate, as well as replenish electrolytes, sugar, and other nutrients

TEA AND COFFEE DRINKS: Teas and coffees to which caloric sweeteners have been added

ENERGY DRINKS: Most energy drinks are carbonated drinks that contain large amounts of caffeine, sugar and other ingredients, such as vitamins, amino acids, and herbal stimulants

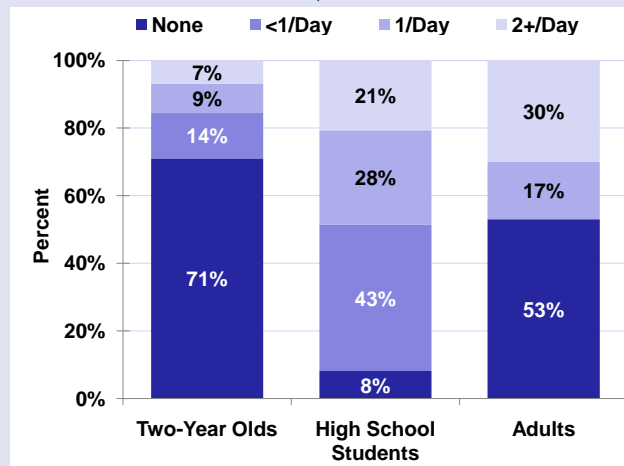
SWEETENED MILKS OR MILK ALTERNATIVES:

Beverages prepared by blending sweetened powder or syrup and milk

WHY ARE SSBs A PROBLEM?

- 2 of every 3 adults and 1 of every 3 children in Alaska are overweight or obese.²
- Maintaining a healthy weight requires a balance of calories consumed and energy expended.
- SSBs:
 - provide “empty calories”, with little or no nutritional value
 - are the largest source of added sugar³ in the U.S. diet, and
 - are an substantial contributor of calories in the U.S. diet.⁴
- High consumption of SSBs is associated with obesity and a number of negative health conditions, including diabetes¹ and cavities.⁵
- Reduction of SSB consumption can lead to weight loss.⁶

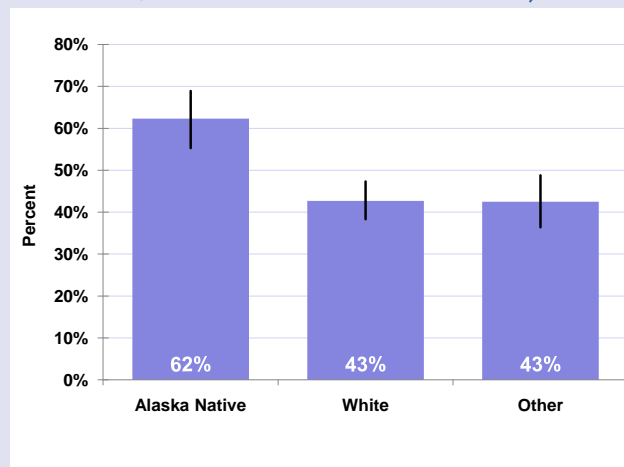
SSB CONSUMPTION: AVERAGE NUMBER OF CANS/GLASSES PER DAY, ALASKA



Sources: Alaska CUBS (2006); Alaska YRBS (2009); Alaska BRFSS (2009; Note: no <1/day response option for adults)

- 16% of two-year olds⁷, 49% of high school students, and 47% of adults in Alaska drink one or more SSBs per day.

PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CONSUMING 1+ CANS/GLASSES OF SSBs PER DAY BY RACE, ALASKA



Source: Alaska YRBS (2009)

- The majority of Alaska Native high school students drink at least 1 SSB per day.
- Two-year olds in northern and southwestern Alaska are much more likely to consume any amount of SSBs (58%) compared to 2-year olds statewide (29%).⁷

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SSB CONSUMPTION

WHAT CAN ALASKAN SCHOOLS, WORKSITES & COMMUNITIES Do?¹

- Ensure ready access to potable drinking water
- Limit access to SSBs
- Promote access to and consumption of healthful alternatives to SSBs
- Limit marketing of SSBs and minimize marketing's impact on children
- Decrease the relative cost of more healthful beverage alternatives through differential pricing of SSBs

66% of Alaskan Adults support policies that ban soda machines in schools²

WHAT CAN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS Do?¹

- Include screening and counseling about SSB consumption as part of routine medical and dental care
- Expand the knowledge and skills of medical and dental care providers to conduct nutrition screening and counseling regarding SSB consumption

WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS Do?⁸

- Drink or serve water, low-fat (1%) milk, or zero calorie beverages instead of SSB.
- Always check the Nutrition Facts label and be aware of the calories in one can or bottle of a beverage.
- If opting for a sugar-sweetened beverage, select the smallest size.

Taxes on SSBs decrease consumption and provide a source of revenue for enhanced obesity prevention efforts.⁹ A \$0.01-per-ounce tax on SSBs in Alaska would yield an estimated \$33,448,941 annually, which could in turn be invested in childhood obesity prevention efforts statewide.¹⁰

References:

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3. Guthrie JF, Morton JF. Food sources of added sweeteners in the diets of Americans. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2000;100:43–51.
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7. [Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Division of Public Health, Maternal & Child Health Epidemiology Unit. Alaska Childhood Understanding Behaviors Survey \(CUBS\). 2006.](#)
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9. Frieden TR, Dietz, W, Collins J. Reducing childhood obesity through policy change: Acting now to prevent obesity. *Health Affairs.* 2010;29(3):357-363.
10. Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity – Revenue Calculator for Soft Drink Taxes, <http://valeruddcenter.org/sodatax.aspx> Accessed April 2, 2010.



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<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/obesity>

